



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Idaho Public Health Districts

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January 2016

Filling Idaho's Insurance Coverage Gap to Create Healthier Communities



The vision of Idaho's Local Public Health Districts is *Healthy People in Healthy Communities*. One of the 10 essential services of public health is to link people to needed personal

health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable. Almost every day, we see patients in our clinics with health needs far greater than the services we can provide.

In public health, our focus is on prevention, and in an ideal world, this is all the health care our communities would need. However, the reality is that we are all afflicted with health conditions at some point in our lives that require acute and chronic care by specialists. As an example, when a patient walks through our doors and we detect a potential cancer through a physical examination, with limited income and no health insurance, these people have nowhere to go. Ultimately, many will end up in emergency rooms seeking care for a late stage serious health condition that could have otherwise been diagnosed, treated, and in many instances, cured. That care is far more expensive than early diagnosis and treatment, and the outcomes are far less favorable.

Closing the Coverage Gap

In Idaho, 78,000 residents fall in the health insurance coverage gap — the majority from working families. Idaho currently has two options aimed at closing the gap.

The **Primary Care Access Plan (PCAP)** is a care coordination proposal that provides access to primary care, but offers no help for individuals with conditions that are identified by the primary care clinician that require a specialist. Emergency care under this proposal for the gap population will continue to be funded by Idaho's taxpayers through the county medically indigent program and state catastrophic health care cost program.

An option supported by Idaho's Local Health Districts, called the **Healthy Idaho Plan**, would provide health insurance coverage for all of our citizens. The Plan incorporates the key concepts developed by Governor Otter's Workgroup on Medicaid Expansion, including personal accountability. A major provision of the Workgroup's recommendation is that Idaho's service delivery system be redesigned. This redesign would shift provider incentives from volume of visits to value of care by creating provider payment incentives to keep people healthy. This is underway as part of Idaho's \$39.5 million Statewide Healthcare Innovation Plan (SHIP) grant. Goal 6 of SHIP is to align payment mechanisms across payers to transform payment methodology from volume to value. Idaho's Local Public Health Districts serve as part of the SHIP Regional Collaboratives with the primary responsibility to support provider practices as they transform to Patient Centered Medical Homes and create medical/health neighborhoods. The SHIP's goal is to improve health care for those who have health insurance, but 78,000 Idahoans will continue to be excluded from our health care system beyond basic primary care offered through limited safety net providers.

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We have many public health challenges facing our state. Finding solutions to scenarios such as rising obesity, low childhood immunization coverage, and some of the highest suicide and prescription drug abuse rates in the country, can seem insurmountable. Through the **Healthy Idaho Plan** we can close the health insurance coverage gap. This will improve the health of Idahoans, by providing more efficient and cost-effective health care, thus reducing the burden on taxpayers.

As Idaho's Local Health Districts, we want everyone in our communities to be healthy, not just those with adequate resources.

HEALTHY PEOPLE IN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

| PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT (1) | PUBLIC HEALTH - IDAHO NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT (2) | SOUTHWEST DISTRICT HEALTH (3) | CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH (4) | SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (5) | SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (6) | EASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (7) |
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